**Meet the Blind Month 2013**

This document provides you with a list of event ideas, marketing and fundraising tips, and discussion points to emphasize during an event. Take pictures and video and let us know all of your unique ideas! Get creative!

**Get Involved in the Community**

* Hospitals or Nursing Homes
	+ - Spend quality time reading Braille to people.
* Restaurant/Bar Night
	+ - Partner with a local restaurant or bar and have a percentage of all proceeds (10% or 20%) donated to the NFB at the end of the night
		- Have a blind trivia or Braille bingo night with an entry fee.
* Museums
* Nonprofit With Similar Missions
	+ - Volunteer for another nonprofit’s event (this both shows community support and allows us to develop relationships)
* Schools
	+ - Teach a lesson: Ask your local schools if you can teach a lesson to sighted kids about Braille or blindness skills. Provide tactile coloring sheets and teach sighted students to write and read their names in Braille.
			* Who’s Whozit:
			* In August, contact a local elementary, middle, or high school to arrange to present the Who's Whozit material to a class (or classes) during the month of October.
			* Each package of Who's Whozit materials will include:
				1. A program guide (focused on both blindness and philanthropy) and appropriate literature tailored to your target audience (elementary, middle, high school, or the general public)
				2. Braille alphabet cards
				3. Whozit coloring page or die cuts
			* A Whozit coloring page and alphabet card will be given to each student who attends the Meet the Blind Month presentation (teachers are welcome to participate as well).
* Community Festivals
	+ - October is a great month for festivals as it is the beginning of fall and Halloween.
		- Set-up a booth for NFB donations and provide literature about the NFB and our programs.
		- Organize your group’s participation in a festival either through volunteering or participating in event activities. Consider coordinating your group’s attire in something NFB related to help brand the NFB.
* Parks
	+ - Organize obstacle courses or interactive games (you may even consider buying a corn hole set or other carnival-like games and charge people a dollar per turn)
* Colleges
	+ - Find college groups or clubs with whom you could speak or participate in an activity
* Support Local Sport Teams
	+ - Arrange for NFB’s logo to appear on a jumbo-tron during a sporting event
		- Ask if a portion of sporting-event ticket sales could be donated to NFB
* Car Wash
	+ - If planning a separate car wash isn’t plausible, consider contacting another organization that already has a carwash scheduled and ask to partner—good for outreach and awareness!
* Neighborhood Clean-Up
	+ - Involve the community in beautifying your neighborhood. This is a perfect opportunity to discuss the NFB and the great work we do! Most cities’ waste management services will provide items such as pick-up sticks and garbage bags.
* Fruit Picking
	+ - Apples, strawberries, blueberries, etc.
* Amusement Park Trip
* Arcade Center
* Corn Maze/Pumpkin Picking
* Public Speaking Engagements:
	+ - Present common misconceptions about blindness to community groups.
			* Remember that many civic and community groups are looking for interesting speakers for a luncheon or dinner meeting. Groups that could be contacted include: Elks, Kiwanis, Lions, Masons, Rotary, garden clubs, neighborhood associations, religious groups, low-vision support groups, senior centers, companies hosting brown bag information luncheon meetings for employees, labor unions, PTAs, and any other groups in your neighborhood.

**Get Involved in the Arts**

* Arts and Craft Project
	+ You can get creative ideas from [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com) or [www.snapguide.com](http://www.snapguide.com)
		- Consider using puffy paint, yarn, beads, etc.
	+ Pumpkin Decorating contest
* Fashion Show
	+ Use NFB members as the models and get each model sponsored.
* Make-Your-Own Pottery
	+ Organize a group to mold their own masterpiece.
* Dance Contest
* Jewelry-Making Party
	+ Sell the finished products either at this event or during another event.
* Talent Show
* Theatre Performance

**Get Active**

* Rock Climbing
* Horseback Riding
* Sailing
* Surfing
* Go-karting
* Rowing
* Miniature Golf
* Ice Skating
* Flash Mob
* White Water Rafting/Tubing
* Bowling
* Organized Sporting Games
	+ Soccer, baseball, judo, etc.
* Fitness Class
	+ Go to or organize a Yoga, Zumba, or other physical class involving current gym members as well as NFB members.

**Demonstrations**

* How to Walk With a Cane or Guide Dog
* How to Match Clothes
	+ Bring several outfits to your event and demonstrate the process you go through.
* How to Cook
	+ Instead of simply holding a bake-sale, engage the public by showing them your kitchen strategies and techniques.
		- EX: Grilling
* How to Put On Make-Up

**Big Events on a Smaller Scale**

* Silent auction
	+ Gather meaningful or interesting items (consider in-kind donations, such as gift cards, sports memorabilia, jewelry, etc.)
* Read-a-Thon Competition
	+ Show off your Braille reading ability – either against other Braille readers or against sighted peers.
* Bowl-a-Thon
	+ People could pledge a certain amount of money for each strike/spare that is bowled.
* Comedy Show
	+ Book a local comedian who may bring in a large audience and sell tickets.

**State Convention**

* Consider incorporating an event or activity during your state’s convention to generate community involvement. Utilize your keynote speaker, National Representative, and members for additional event-support.

**Videos**

* If you’ve seen a video that resonates with you, explains your message, and/or pulls at your heartstrings, share it during your Meet the Blind Month event! Remember Raveena Alli’s speech about BELL during the National Convention? Utilize the following link to share her inspiring speech during your event: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efiCmCPelxg>
* TED Talks
	+ Ted Talks are “ideas worth spreading.” This is an online tool allowing viewers to obtain knowledge and motivation from inspirational speakers.
	+ Consider this video, for example: <http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong.html?utm_source=email&source=email&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ios-share>. You may watch it all the way through (and you should)! But when sharing it with an audience, play the video starting at 11 minutes and 49 seconds when it begins to introduce the benefits of fundraising.
* Hint: Videos can be powerful when used properly. Short videos are a great resource to utilize in support of your message. Long videos may cause the audience to lose interest. If you show a short video or a small portion from a longer video, perform an activity or start an interactive discussion. Multiple short videos during an event may be effective as well.

**Implementing and Promoting Your Event:**

There are affordable ways to host an activity.

* Consider in-kind material donations so that out-of-pocket money need not need to be used. Involve local partnerships and/or sponsors.
* Hint—to minimize costs, tell organizations that we are a 501(c)(3) organization. For hosting that incurs cost, attempt to partner with specific places and suggest that the event location give NFB a discounted rate or allow your affiliate to keep a percentage of the sales as part of your fundraising efforts. Most businesses are more than willing to help a good cause because their company will be seen in a positive light and will receive positive publicity.
* Fundraising
	+ Incorporate 50/50 raffles, auction items off, have people pledge a certain amount during an event (ex. sponsor a person during a fashion show), or have a donor text your affiliate’s keyword to 41444 (see the “Text Donation” sub-section in the 2013 Campaign Guidelines document for more information).

Marketing your event(s) will help with both the fundraising and outreach challenges.

* Signage:
	+ Create flyers and display them on bulletin boards and at local businesses (get permission first!) prior to your event or activity. Also use signage during your event to promote it to the public.
	+ Post on your social-media site and website
	+ Word of mouth! – Remember: we want the general public to get involved, not just our network of members!
* Social giving: Post donation instructions on your online network. You never know if a person wants to give unless you ask!
* Attire: Dress similarly, or wear something NFB related so the public can see we are always promoting our brand!
* Use your connections: Think of all the people you know and with whom they work. Find out if they can provide you with marketing opportunities. Do you know any teachers that would be willing to let you teach a class? Do you know anyone who owns a store who would be willing to let you leave literature about the NFB there or collect donations?

**Discussion points are listed below. You may choose to emphasize one or all of these points when meeting the public, interacting with the media, and giving presentations.**

1. With a membership of over fifty thousand Americans, the National Federation of the Blind is the largest membership organization of blind people in this country, with more than seven hundred local affiliates and chapters as well as many divisions and interest groups.
2. The mission of the National Federation of the Blind is to achieve widespread emotional acceptance and the intellectual understanding that the real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight but the misconceptions and lack of information that exist. We do this by bringing blind people together to share successes, to support each other in times of failure, and to create imaginative solutions.
3. An organization of blind people is the best resource for individuals facing vision loss, their families, professionals who work with the blind, and governmental officials who deal with issues of importance to the blind.
4. The NFB Jernigan Institute is the first and only research and training center on blindness developed and operated by an organization of blind people. The programs, services, research, and technology of the Institute reflect, first and always, the consumer perspective and are responsive to the pragmatic needs of the blind in a way unique to an organization of blind people.
5. The two biggest barriers facing the blind are access to information and public attitudes towards blindness. We seek to eradicate both of these barriers with programs like the NFB Blind Driver Challenge (BDC).
6. The NFB BDC is a program to build nonvisual interface technologies that will empower blind people to drive a car independently. The BDC focuses on the development of new technologies that will have a major impact on our society as a whole, and will advance access to visual information for the blind around the world.
7. We are leading the way in the promotion of access to technology for the blind by advocating for the implementation of national technology access standards, conducting educational activities to inform technology developers and others of the importance of access design, and assisting technology companies in their efforts to market helpful nonvisual access technology applications.

**If you have any questions about how to plan any of these events, please contact Ilana Posner at (410) 659-9314, extension 2283, or via e-mail at** **iposner@nfb.org****.**